

No. 1437

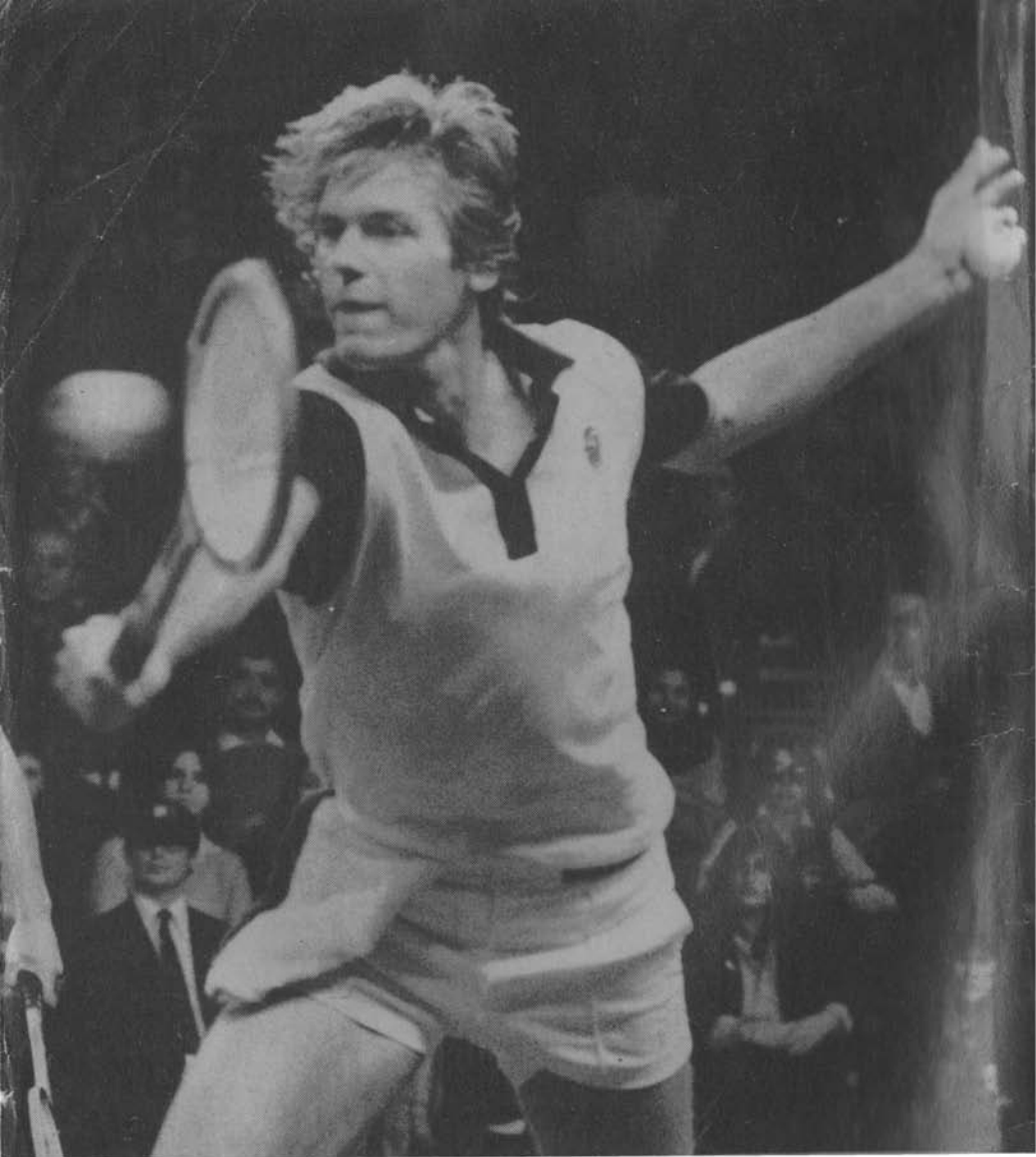
12p

Commando

WAR STORIES IN PICTURES

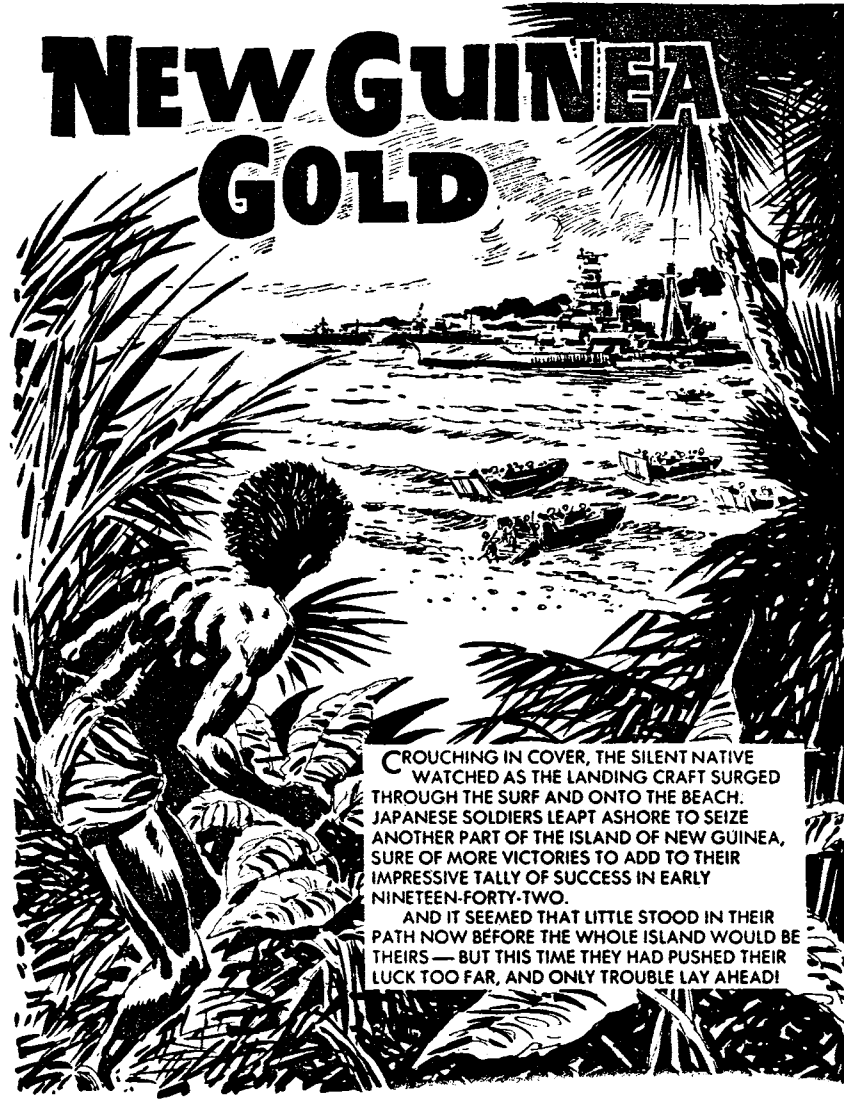


NEW GUINEA GOLD



Stars of Tennis — Peter Fleming

NEW GUINEA GOLD



CROUCHING IN COVER, THE SILENT NATIVE WATCHED AS THE LANDING CRAFT SURGED THROUGH THE SURF AND ONTO THE BEACH. JAPANESE SOLDIERS LEAPT ASHORE TO SEIZE ANOTHER PART OF THE ISLAND OF NEW GUINEA, SURE OF MORE VICTORIES TO ADD TO THEIR IMPRESSIVE TALLY OF SUCCESS IN EARLY NINETEEN-FORTY-TWO.

AND IT SEEMED THAT LITTLE STOOD IN THEIR PATH NOW BEFORE THE WHOLE ISLAND WOULD BE THEIRS — BUT THIS TIME THEY HAD PUSHED THEIR LUCK TOO FAR, AND ONLY TROUBLE LAY AHEAD!

THE WATCHING NATIVE TURNED AND RAN BACK THROUGH THE HILLS TO THE JUNGLE CLEARING WHERE THE WORKINGS OF A GOLD MINE LAY. IT WAS OWNED AND RUN BY HARRY SIMPSON, A GRIZZLED AUSTRALIAN WHO HAD PROSPECTED HERE FOR YEARS.

WE MUST GO TO THE JUNGLE TOO, QUICKLY.



LATER, MUNDA. JAPS OR NO JAPS, THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE.

MUNDA THE NATIVE DID NOT ARGUE. OLD HARRY HAD BROUGHT HIM UP LIKE A SON AND ONLY HE OF ALL THE OTHER WORKERS HAD NOT FLED INTO THE JUNGLE AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE.

AND THERE WAS INDEED WORK TO BE DONE. A FORTUNE IN GOLD BULLION REFINED AT THE MINE HAD BEEN AWAITING SHIPMENT OUT BY AIR, BUT NOW IT HAD TO BE SAFELY CONCEALED.

WE MUST HIDE THE GOLD IN THE MINE BEFORE THE JAPS GET HERE.



THEN WE HEAD OUT FOR PORT MORESBY, YES?

THE IMPORTANT HARBOUR OF PORT MORESBY WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GREAT ISLAND, TOO FAR FOR AN OLD MAN AND A YOUTH TO CARRY SO MUCH GOLD. IT WAS STILL HELD BY THE ALLIES.

ONCE THE GOLD WAS WELL-HIDDEN, THE TWO MEN COULD DISAPPEAR INTO THE JUNGLE. THEY TOOK PLENTY OF SUPPLIES, AND HARRY SLUNG HIS GUN OVER HIS SHOULDER WHILE MUNDA CAME FROM HIS HUT WITH HIS RAZOR-EDGED SPEAR.



THE OLD PROSPECTOR GRINNED AT HIS COMPANION'S FIERCE DETERMINATION TO TAKE ON ANY DANGER.

FOR DAYS THEY JOURNEYED TOWARDS PORT MORESBY WITHOUT EVER SEEING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING IN THE DENSE JUNGLE.



HARRY HAD DONE WELL TO HIDE THE GOLD. HE KNEW FOR CERTAIN NOW THEY COULD NEVER HAVE CARRIED IT ON THEIR BACKS.



THE MOUNTAIN RANGE WHICH THEY NOW HAD TO CROSS WAS EVEN MORE TERRIFYING THAN THE JUNGLE.

THE HARSH COUNTRY FOUGHT THEM EVERY INCH OF THE WAY. BUT WHEN HARRY FINALLY BEGAN TO SAG, MUNDA PICKED HIM UP AND STRUGGLED ON WITH NO WORD OF COMPLAINT.

GO IT
ALONE, MUNDA.
I'VE HAD IT.

WE GO
TOGETHER,
OR WE NOT GO AT
ALL. YOU SLEEP,
MUNDA CARRY.

THE LOYALTY OF THE
NATIVE WAS COMPLETE.

OLD HARRY WAS ON HIS FEET AGAIN WHEN THEY REACHED PORT MORESBY. THEY HAD MADE IT AT LAST TO THE TOWN WHERE THE RESISTANCE TO THE INVASION WAS BEING ORGANISED.

I'M SO
TIRE I COULD
FALL DOWN IN THE
MUD AND SLEEP
FOR A YEAR.

WE FIND CLEAN
BEDS... THEN WE BOTH
SLEEP FOR TWO YEARS!

THE OLD MAN AND THE YOUTH HAD BEATEN THE
JAPS, THE JUNGLE AND THE MOUNTAINS TO
REACH SAFETY.

THE FIRST MAN THEY SAW TO ASK DIRECTIONS FROM WAS BEN FARRADAY, A PLANTER HOUNDED FROM HIS PLANTATION BY THE INVASION OF THE JAPS. HE HAD BEEN BORN IN BRITAIN BUT HAD LIVED OUT HERE FOR YEARS.

WE
WOULD SPEAK
TO YOU!

YOU
BLOKES TALKING
TO ME?

NOW BEN WAS ENROLLED IN A VOLUNTEER FORCE OF EX-MINERS AND PLANTERS BANDED TOGETHER INTO A MILITARY UNIT BUT NOT YET DETAILED FOR ANY SPECIFIC TASK.

A LITTLE CLEAN
HOTEL, SON. THAT'S
ALL WE WANT.

WE'D BETTER
GET YOU OFF THE
STREETS FIRST — THE AIR-
RAID ALERT WAS SOUNDED
TEN MINUTES AGO.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND THE
JAP AIR-FORCE RAIDED ALMOST EVERY DAY.

THE AIR RAID WAS OVER BY NOW AND THE ARMY BEGAN TO CLEAR UP. AND THE JAPANESE INVADERS HAD YET ANOTHER DEADLY ENEMY — MUNDA.

WHAT WILL
HAPPEN TO BOSS
SIMPSON'S BODY?

IT'S OK, MUNDA,
THE ARMY WILL SEE
TO HIS BURIAL.

A COMMON BOND BROUGHT ABOUT BY OLD HARRY'S DEATH HAD SPRUNG UP BETWEEN BEN AND MUNDA, AND BEN WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THE TALK OF THE GOLD BULLION.

IN REPLY TO BEN'S QUESTIONS, MUNDA TOLD THE STORY OF THE GOLD AND THE HAZARDOUS JOURNEY ACROSS THE ISLAND.

THAT WAS SOME
TREK, ESPECIALLY
FOR HARRY ...

BOSS SIMPSON
WAS A TOUGH MAN. NOW
HE HAS GIVEN YOU THE GOLD
AT THE MINE, WE WILL FIGHT
JAPONIS TOGETHER, EH?

BUT FIRST MUNDA NEEDED A GOOD SLEEP AND BEN
TOOK HIM TO HIS OWN DIGS.

THEN HE WENT TO SEE HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER WITH THE STORY OF THE GOLD. THE MEN OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCE WERE FAR FROM PLEASED AT NOT BEING USED AS A UNIT YET, AND BEN SAW THIS AS A GREAT CHANCE TO ADD TO THEIR POOR EQUIPMENT.

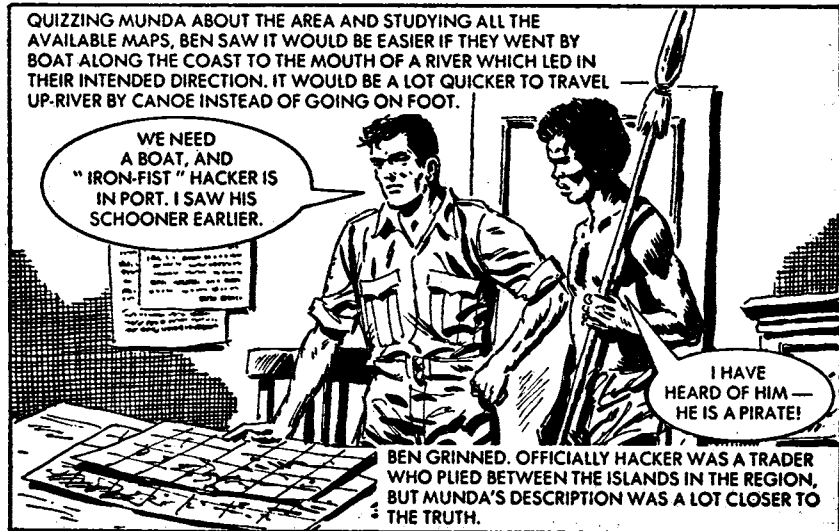
THAT GOLD
WOULD BUY US ALL THE
WEAPONS WE NEED. MAYBE THEN
THE ARMY WOULD TAKE
SOME NOTICE OF US!



IF YOU WANT
TO GO POKING ABOUT
IN JAP TERRITORY, THEN GOOD
LUCK TO YOU, BEN. I'VE
NO OBJECTIONS.

QUIZZING MUNDA ABOUT THE AREA AND STUDYING ALL THE AVAILABLE MAPS, BEN SAW IT WOULD BE EASIER IF THEY WENT BY BOAT ALONG THE COAST TO THE MOUTH OF A RIVER WHICH LED IN THEIR INTENDED DIRECTION. IT WOULD BE A LOT QUICKER TO TRAVEL UP-RIVER BY CANOE INSTEAD OF GOING ON FOOT.

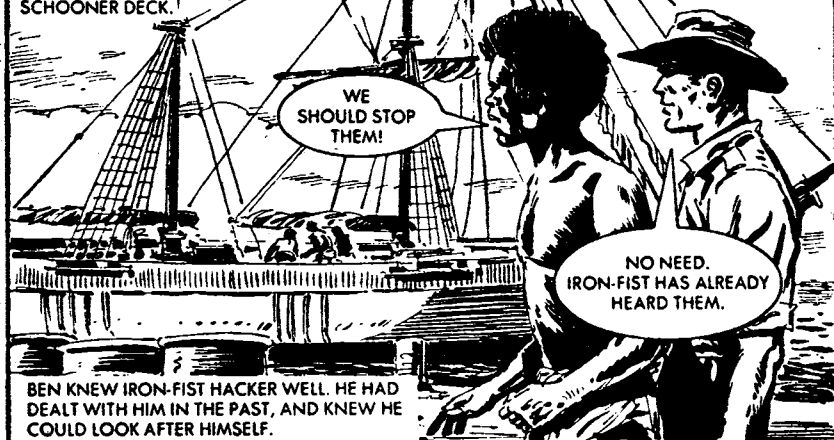
WE NEED
A BOAT, AND
"IRON-FIST" HACKER IS
IN PORT. I SAW HIS
SCHOONER EARLIER.



I HAVE
HEARD OF HIM —
HE IS A PIRATE!

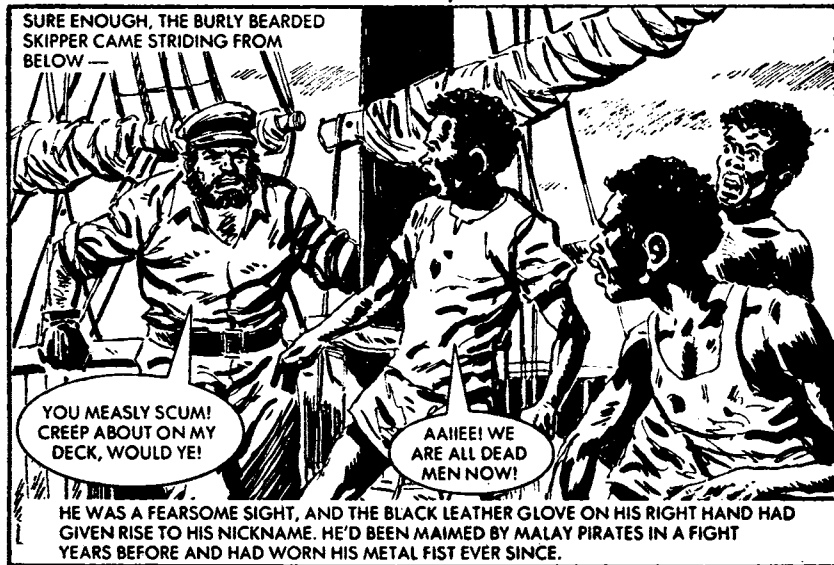
BEN GRINNED. OFFICIALLY HACKER WAS A TRADER WHO PLIED BETWEEN THE ISLANDS IN THE REGION, BUT MUNDA'S DESCRIPTION WAS A LOT CLOSER TO THE TRUTH.

WHEN BEN AND MUNDA ARRIVED AT THE DOCK WHERE IRON-FIST'S SCHOONER WAS BERTHED, THEY WERE IN TIME TO WITNESS AN ATTEMPT BY SOME LOCAL NATIVES TO STEAL SOME STORES PILED ON THE SCHOONER DECK.



BEN KNEW IRON-FIST HACKER WELL. HE HAD DEALT WITH HIM IN THE PAST, AND KNEW HE COULD LOOK AFTER HIMSELF.

SURE ENOUGH, THE BURLY BEARDED SKIPPER CAME STRIDING FROM BELOW —

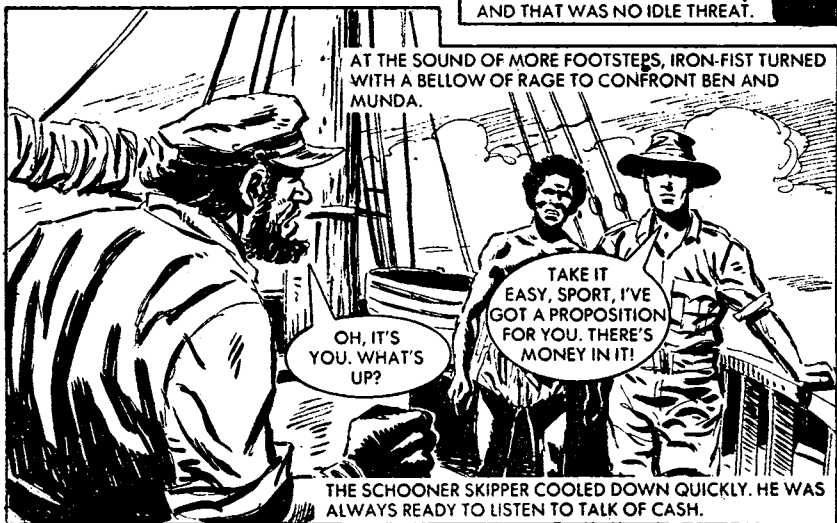


HE WAS A FEARSOME SIGHT, AND THE BLACK LEATHER GLOVE ON HIS RIGHT HAND HAD GIVEN RISE TO HIS NICKNAME. HE'D BEEN MAIMED BY MALAY PIRATES IN A FIGHT YEARS BEFORE AND HAD WORN HIS METAL FIST EVER SINCE.

AND WHEN HE SWUNG THE HEAVY RIGHT HAND, THE THIEVES WERE SOON PUT TO FLIGHT.



OVER THE SIDE ALL THREE WENT, CURSED ROUNDLY ON THEIR WAY.

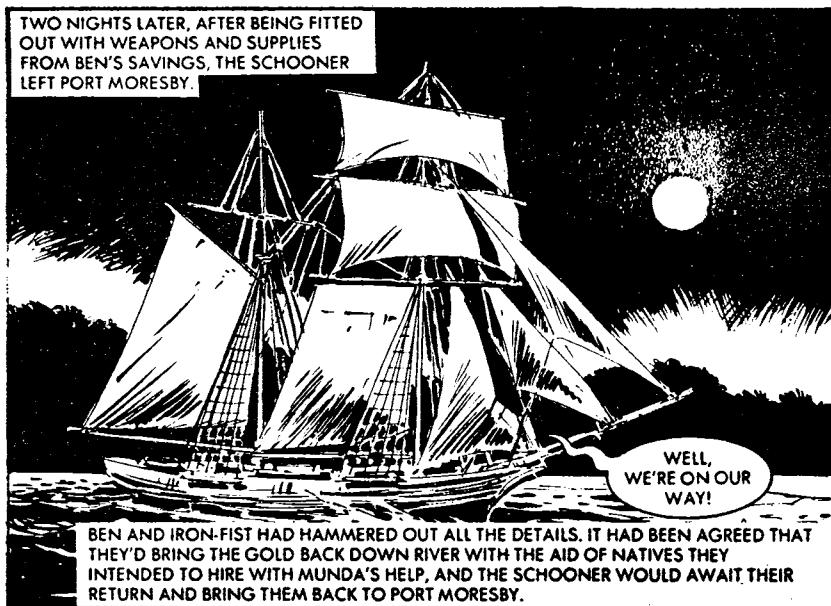


KNOWING THAT IRON-FIST WOULD SOON SEARCH OUT THE COMPLETE STORY, BEN TOLD HIM ALL ABOUT THE GOLD AND THE NEED FOR THE SCHOONER TO TAKE THEM TO THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER.



BUT AS THERE WAS NOT, BEN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO AGREE. HIS ONE CONSOLATION WAS THAT HE KNEW IRON-FIST WAS A GOOD MAN TO HAVE BY YOUR SIDE IF TROUBLE BREWED UP.

TWO NIGHTS LATER, AFTER BEING FITTED OUT WITH WEAPONS AND SUPPLIES FROM BEN'S SAVINGS, THE SCHOONER LEFT PORT MORESBY.

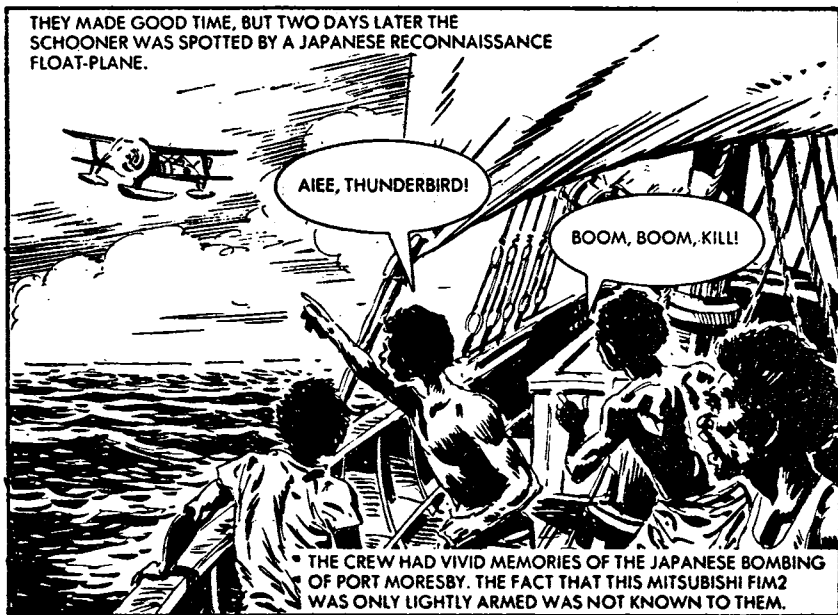


BEN AND IRON-FIST HAD HAMMERED OUT ALL THE DETAILS. IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THEY'D BRING THE GOLD BACK DOWN RIVER WITH THE AID OF NATIVES THEY INTENDED TO HIRE WITH MUNDA'S HELP, AND THE SCHOONER WOULD AWAIT THEIR RETURN AND BRING THEM BACK TO PORT MORESBY.

THEY ALL KNEW IT WOULD BE A LONG AND DANGEROUS HAUL UP THE COAST. IRONFIST RESPECTED THESE TRICKY WATERS AND KEPT HIS NATIVE CREW WELL AWARE OF THIS.



THEY MADE GOOD TIME, BUT TWO DAYS LATER THE SCHOONER WAS SPOTTED BY A JAPANESE RECONNAISSANCE FLOAT-PLANE.



THE CREW HAD VIVID MEMORIES OF THE JAPANESE BOMBING OF PORT MORESBY. THE FACT THAT THIS MITSUBISHI FIM2 WAS ONLY LIGHTLY ARMED WAS NOT KNOWN TO THEM.

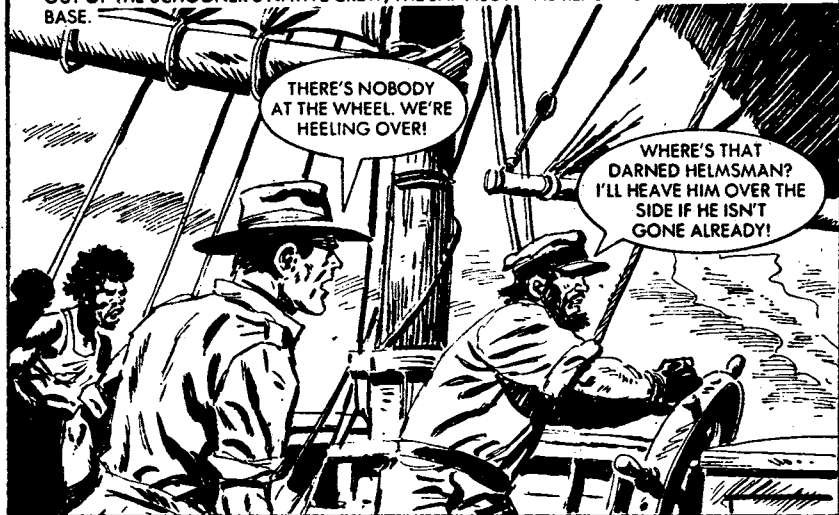
THE JAP PILOT AND OBSERVER DECIDED TO GIVE THE LONELY SAILING SHIP A FEW BURSTS TO RELIEVE THE BOREDOM OF THEIR PATROL. THEIR INTENTIONS WERE SOON VERY CLEAR —



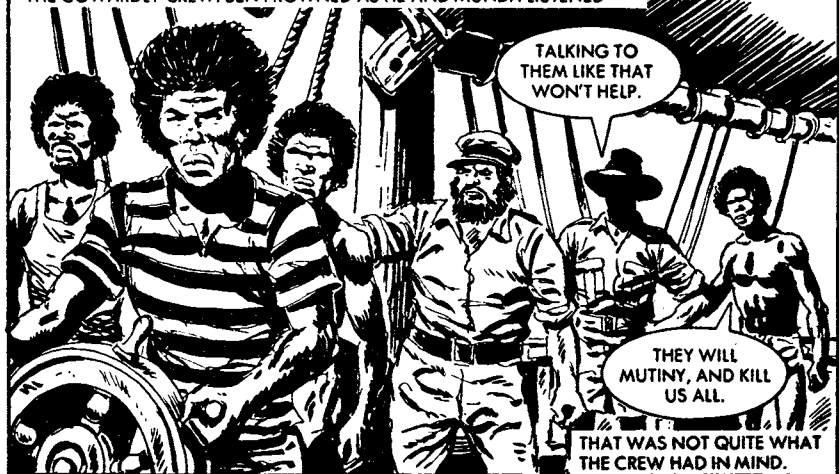
HOT LEAD TORE INTO THE DECK PLANKING AS THE TWO FORWARD-FIRING MACHINE GUNS CHATTERED INTO LIFE. THE BULLETS FLEW ALARMINGLY CLOSE TO BEN AND HIS MATES.



HAVING ANGERED THE SKIPPER AND HIS "PASSENGERS", AND SCARED THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF THE SCHOONER'S NATIVE CREW, THE JAP PILOT WAS READY TO HEAD BACK TO HIS BASE.



IRON-FIST TOLD HIS HELMSMAN JUST WHAT HE THOUGHT OF HIM AND THE COWARDLY CREW. BEN FROWNED AS HE AND MUNDA LISTENED —



THEY MADE NO ANSWER TO THE TIRADE OF OATHS, BUT THEIR MINDS WERE MADE UP. THEY WANTED NO PART OF THE WHITE MEN'S WAR, AND THAT NIGHT THEY DESERTED, LEAVING THE SCHOONER TO ITS OWN DEVICES WHILE THE SKIPPER, BEN AND MUNDA SLEPT BELOW.

NO NOISE.
CAPTAIN GO CRAZY
AND KILL!

THE NATIVES SWAM ASHORE
AT A SAFE POINT.

BUT WITH NO HAND ON THE WHEEL, THE
SILENT SCHOONER DRIFTED GENTLY
TOWARDS THE COAST WHERE SURF
POUNDED OVER THE DEADLY REEFS.



THE SHIP STRUCK THE REEF WITH A
CRASH, RIPPING A MORTAL HOLE IN
HER ANCIENT KEEL. NOTHING COULD
SAVE HER NOW.



THE SHOCK OF THE COLLISION AWOKED THE THREE MEN STILL ON BOARD. THEY RACED UP ONTO THE DECK—

WE'RE
AGROUND!

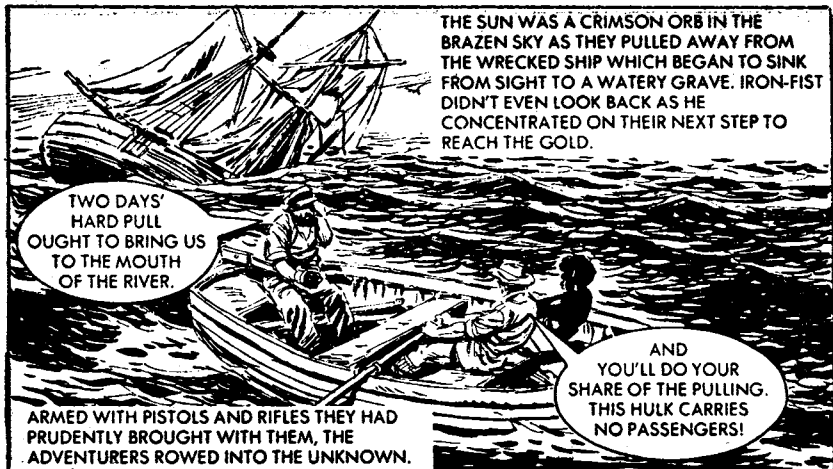
THOSE
YELLOW RATS! THEY'VE
ALL DESERTED! I'LL SEE 'EM
HANG FOR THIS IF I EVER
GET BACK TO MORESBY!

RIGHT NOW IT LOOKED AS IF THE ODDS WERE
HEAVILY AGAINST ANY OF THE TRIO EVER
GETTING BACK TO PORT MORESBY.

IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE VESSEL WAS FINISHED. EVEN AS THEY LOWERED THE SHIP'S
BOAT, THE SCHOONER BEGAN TO TEAR HER TIMBERS APART.

LOWER
AWAY, YE
SWABS!

WATCH
YOUR TALK,
IRON-FIST. WE'RE NOT
MEMBERS OF YOUR
CREW!



THEY BEACHED CLOSE TO THE VILLAGE AND CAUTIOUSLY APPROACHED THE WATCHING NATIVES. SOME OF THE TRIBES WERE VERY FIERCE AND WAR-LIKE IN THESE REMOTE REGIONS AND A WHITE MAN WAS NEVER SURE WHAT SORT OF WELCOME HE MIGHT GET.



WHEN MUNDA HAD EXPLAINED ALL AND THE NATIVES WERE SATISFIED THAT THE STRANGERS MEANT THEM NO HARM, THEY ENTERTAINED THEM WITH A FEAST.



A DUG-OUT CANOE WAS SOON PURCHASED FOR THEIR CONTINUED TRIP UP-RIVER, BUT NO GUIDE WAS FORTHCOMING. NO AMOUNT OF TRADE TOBACCO COULD PERSUADE THE YOUNG MEN OF THE TRIBE TO VENTURE INTO THE UNKNOWN.



DAY AFTER ENDLESS DAY THEY PADDED IN SWELTERING HEAT INTO THE VIRTUALLY UNEXPLORED INTERIOR. DANGER WAS NEVER FAR AWAY—



THAT WAS ONLY TOO TRUE. THE JAPANESE PATROLLED CONSTANTLY ON THE FEW JUNGLE TRAILS, AND THE AREA THEY WERE NOW IN WAS PEOPLED BY PRIMITIVE TRIBES STILL KNOWN TO BE HEAD-HUNTERS.

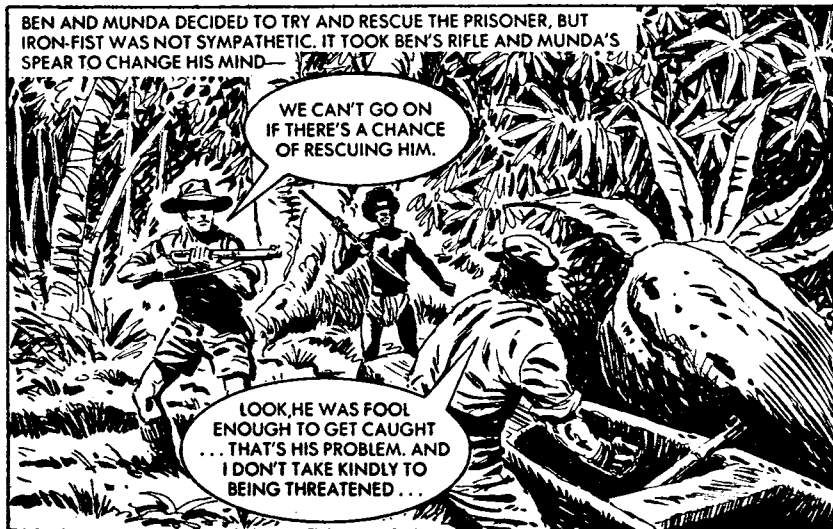
THEN, AS THEY WERE BREAKING CAMP ONE MORNING, THEY HEARD CANOES APPROACHING AND THE CHANTING OF A NATIVE SONG. THEY STAYED WELL-HIDDEN—



MUNDA'S NEXT WORDS CHILLED BEN TO THE BONE. THE HEAD-HUNTERS IT SEEMED, WERE ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THEIR VILLAGE... AND THERE THEY WOULD CUT OFF THE WHITE MAN'S HEAD TO KEEP AS A TROPHY.



BEN AND MUNDA DECIDED TO TRY AND RESCUE THE PRISONER, BUT IRON-FIST WAS NOT SYMPATHETIC. IT TOOK BEN'S RIFLE AND MUNDA'S SPEAR TO CHANGE HIS MIND—



IGNORING IRON-FIST'S CONTINUED ANGRY CURSES, THEY TURNED THE DUG-OUT BACK DOWN THE RIVER AND WENT IN SEARCH OF THE HEAD-HUNTERS.

TRY TO SEE
WHERE THEY WENT
ASHORE, MUNDA.

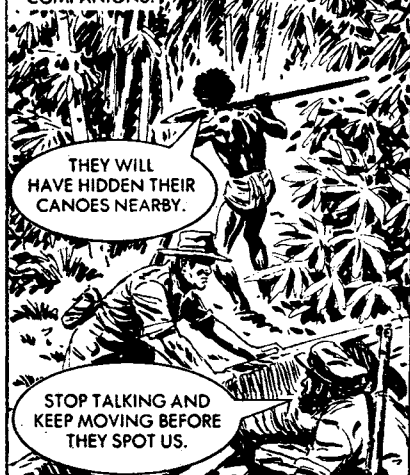
YOU'RE
MAD—BOTH
OF YOU!



MUNDA SOON SAW WHERE THE CANOES HAD LANDED, AND IRON-FIST RELUCTANTLY PREPARED TO GO ASHORE WITH HIS COMPANIONS.

THEY WILL
HAVE HIDDEN THEIR
CANOES NEARBY.

STOP TALKING AND
KEEP MOVING BEFORE
THEY SPOT US.



LIKE A TRACKER HOUND, MUNDA LED THE WHITE MEN FROM THE RIVER ON THE TRAIL OF THE SAVAGE NATIVES AND THEIR PRISONER.

I DON'T
LIKE THIS ONE
LITTLE BIT!

SILENCE,
WE ARE CLOSE TO
THE VILLAGE!



THEY MADE THEIR FINAL APPROACH TO THE VILLAGE VERY CAREFULLY INDEED AND THE SIGHT THEY SAW WAS LIKE A SCENE OUT OF A NIGHTMARE. THE WHITE MAN WAS LASHED TO A POLE WHILE HIS CAPTORS DANCED TRIUMPHANTLY.



BEN SIZED UP THE SITUATION AND PLANNED A DIVERSION TO RESCUE THE PRISONER.



LEAVING BEN HIDDEN ALONE, IRON-FIST AND MUNDA MOVED SILENTLY INTO THE DARKNESS TO FIRE THE VILLAGE. THERE WAS PLENTY FOLIAGE TO SHAPE INTO THE TINDER-DRY TORCHES.



IN MINUTES THE HEAD-HUNTERS' VILLAGE WAS A BLAZING INFERNO, THE FEROCITY OF THE FIRE STRIKING FEAR INTO THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE NATIVES.



IT WAS NOW OR NEVER FOR BEN TO DASH FROM COVER AND CUT THE MAN FREE. EVEN IN ALL THE CONFUSION, IT WOULD NOT TAKE LONG FOR THE HEAD-HUNTERS TO REMEMBER THAT THEY STILL HAD A PRISONER.



UNSEEN, BEN REACHED THE PRISONER AND SLASHED AT HIS BONDS.

THE MAN WAS AMAZED—



THERE WAS NO TIME TO EXPLAIN—BEN SEVERED THE LAST KNOT AND PUSHED THE BEWILDERED MAN TOWARDS THE COVER OF THE JUNGLE.

THE SAVAGES SUDDENLY BECAME AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ABOUT TO LOSE A PRIME HEAD.

THE WHITE MAN ESCAPES FROM US!

KEEP RUNNING, COBBER!



IF THEY WERE TO MAKE IT TO THE RIVER, BEN KNEW HE MUST HALT THE HEAD-HUNTERS' WILD CHARGE. HE DROPPED TO ONE KNEE—

I DIDN'T WANT TO START SHOOTING, BUT I'VE GOT NO CHOICE!



PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES THE NATIVES HEARD THE BANG OF A RIFLE AND FELT THE IMPACT OF BULLETS. THEY STOPPED IN CONFUSION, ANGRILY MILLING AROUND JUST AS MUNDA AND IRON-FIST RE-APPEARED AT BEN'S SHOULDER.

YOU MIGHT TRY FIRING A FEW SHOTS TO COVER ME!

LET'S BEAT IT OUT OF THAT HORNETS' NEST. WE AIN'T WAITING ALL NIGHT FOR YOU!



THE RETREAT BACK TO THE RIVER WAS DONE IN RECORD TIME, WITH BEN HALTING ANY CLOSE PURSUIT WITH WELL-AIMED BULLETS.

GET IN
AND START ROWING.
A COUPLE MORE SHOTS
SHOULD HOLD
'EM BACK!

COME ON, WE'VE
GOT A DATE WITH A
HEAP OF GOLD!

ONCE THEY HAD PUSHED OFF INTO THE CHANNEL THERE WAS NO SIGN OF PURSUIT BY THE HEAD-HUNTERS.

THEY
MUST HAVE
GONE BACK TO START
BUILDING A NEW
VILLAGE!

IT WILL
NOT BE WISE
TO COME BACK THIS
WAY. THEY WILL
REMEMBER US!

WHEN THEY COULD AT LAST RELAX A LITTLE, BEN QUIZZED THEIR NEW COMPANION. HIS ENGLISH WAS HEAVILY ACCENTED AND HE SAID HE WAS KARL SCHULTZ, A GERMAN PLANTER DRIVEN OUT BY THE JAPANESE INVASION OF NEW GUINEA.



IRON-FIST WAS STILL NOT HAPPY AT HAVING AN EXTRA MAN ALONG, BUT WHEN THEY HALTED FOR THE NIGHT, BEN MADE HIM SEE REASON.



LATER THAT NIGHT, WHEN BEN AND IRON-FIST SLEPT AND MUNDA STOOD GUARD, SCHULTZ QUIETLY AND CAREFULLY ROSE FROM THE GROUND AND STOLE TOWARDS MUNDA—



THE GERMAN EXPLAINED THAT HE COULD NOT SLEEP AND OFFERED TO STAND WATCH WITH MUNDA. THEY CHATTED CASUALLY, BUT FINALLY SCHULTZ GOT ROUND TO THE GOLD.



LATER NEXT DAY, WHEN THE RIVER WAS NO LONGER NAVIGABLE, THE GOLD HUNTERS WERE FORCED TO COME ASHORE.



MUNDA WAS RIGHT. AFTER TWO DAYS STEADY CLIMBING THEY SAW THE MOUNTAIN WHICH ROSE ABOVE THE MINE.

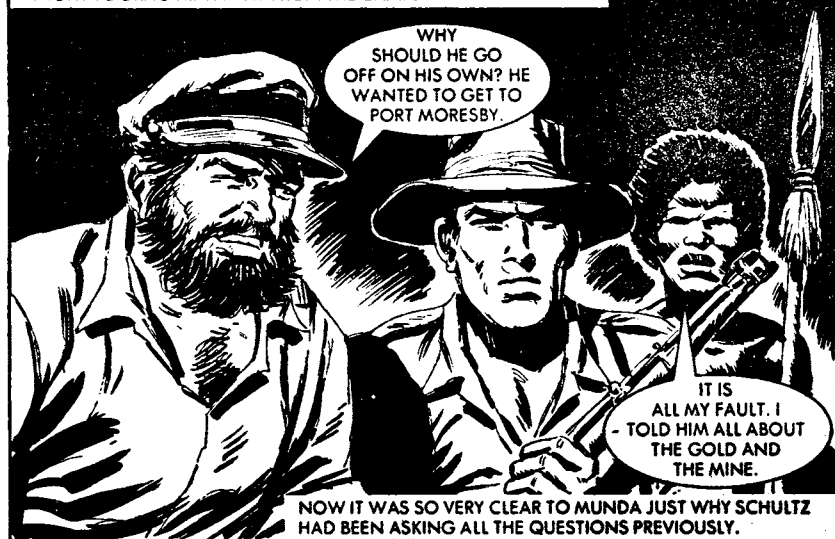


THAT NIGHT, AS IRON-FIST DOZED OFF DURING HIS STINT ON GUARD, SCHULTZ ROSE QUIETLY TO HIS FEET AND SLIPPED OFF INTO THE JUNGLE. ONE THING WAS CERTAIN—SCHULTZ WAS NOT AS INNOCENT AS HE CLAIMED.

WHEN BEN WOKE UP AN HOUR LATER, SCHULTZ WAS LONG GONE AND IRON-FIST WAS STILL ASLEEP.



WHERE HAD THE GERMAN GONE—HAD SOMETHING COME IN THE NIGHT TO DRAG HIM AWAY FROM THE CAMP?



IRON-FIST WAS SO ANGRY THAT HE GRABBED MUNDA BY THE THROAT AND WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM THERE AND THEN BUT FOR BEN.



THEY KNEW THEY MUST MOVE ON QUICKLY, AND THEY MADE GOOD TIME OVER THE ROUGH TERRAIN. TWO DAYS LATER THEY REACHED THE GOLD MINE—



MUNDA QUICKLY LED THE WAY TO THE MINE ENTRANCE AND PUSHED AWAY THE LEAVES AND BRANCHES THAT THE OLD MINER HAD USED TO CAMOUFLAGE IT.



HERE IS THE MINE!

COME ON, LET'S GET IN THERE, AND GET THAT GOLD!

THEY HAD NOT WALKED FAR INTO THE MINE-SHAFT WHEN MUNDA RECEIVED A NASTY SHOCK.



AIEEE! SPIRITS GUARD THE GOLD. THIS IS AN EVIL PLACE!

THAT'S JUST OLD SIMPSON'S WAY OF DISCOURAGING NATIVES FROM COMING IN HERE. THEY WON'T HURT YOU, MUNDA.



DON'T ANYBODY MOVE! THIS PLACE IS BOOBY-TRAPPED.

AS THEY MOVED PAST THE GRINNING SKULLS, BEN SUDDENLY FELT HIS FOOT TOUCH A WIRE STRETCHED TAUT ACROSS THE SHAFT. HE KNEW AT ONCE WHAT IT WAS—

IT SEEMED THAT HARRY SIMPSON HAD TAKEN AMPLE PRECAUTIONS TO MAKE SURE NOBODY STOLE THE GOLD.

BEN CAUGHT THE WIRE IN THE BEAM OF HIS TORCH, AND HE FOLLOWED IT TO THE SIDE OF THE SHAFT TO SEVERAL STICKS OF DYNAMITE WHICH WERE CONCEALED BEHIND SOME ROCKS.

THE OLD COOT. IF WE'D TRIPPED OVER THE WIRE THIS LOT WOULD HAVE EXPLODED IN OUR FACES.

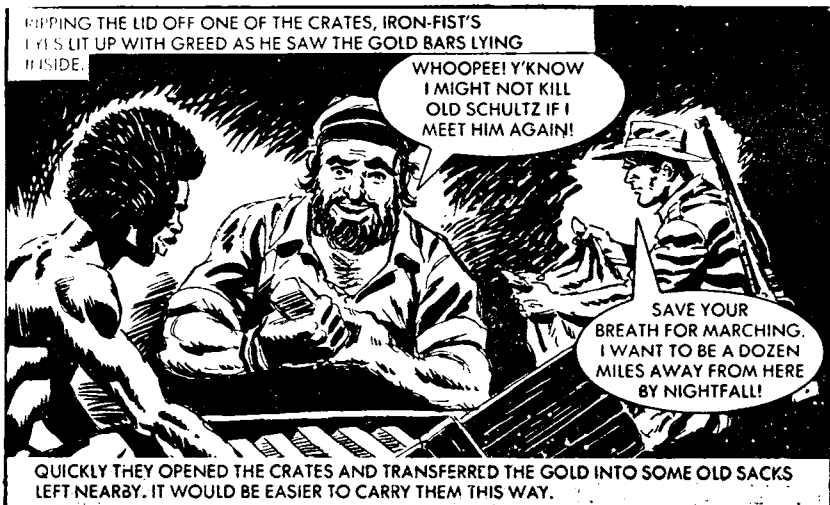
YOU BE PRETTY DARNED CAREFUL, FARRADAY. I'VE ALREADY LOST MY BOAT. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MY LIFE AS WELL!

IRON-FIST WATCHED TENSELY AS BEN SET TO WORK TO DISCONNECT THE WIRE FROM THE DYNAMITE.

SIMPSON NEVER INTENDED ANYONE TO STUMBLE ON HIS GOLD BY ACCIDENT.

SERVE OLD SCHULTZ RIGHT IF HE HAD GOT HERE FIRST, EH?

BOTH MEN BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF AS BEN HELD UP THE DISCONNECTED WIRE.



BUT WHEN THE THREE MEN RETRACED THEIR STEPS TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE MINE, THEY FOUND THAT A RECEPTION COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF SCHULTZ AND SEVERAL JAP SOLDIERS WERE WAITING FOR THEM.

THROW
DOWN YOUR GUNS, PLEASE,
GENTLEMEN!

IRON-FIST AND BEN KNEW IT WOULD BE USELESS
TO TRY AND FIGHT THEIR WAY OUT, AND THEY
SULLENLY THREW DOWN THEIR RIFLES.

SCHULTZ INFORMED BEN AND HIS COMPANIONS THAT HE AND THE JAP SOLDIERS HAD BEEN HIDDEN AROUND THE MINE FOR SOME TIME, AND HAD EVEN SEEN THEM ENTER THE ACTUAL MINE-SHAFT.

I THOUGHT
YOU HATED THE
NAZIS, SCHULTZ?

I DO, BUT
THE JAPANESE
ARE MY FRIENDS. I
HAVE WORKED FOR THEIR
SECRET SERVICE IN
THE EAST FOR MANY
YEARS NOW.

WHEN SCHULTZ CONTINUED TO TAUNT THE THREE MEN, THANKING THEM FOR RESCUING HIM FROM THE HEAD-HUNTERS, IT WAS MORE THAN IRON-FIST COULD STAND, AND HE RUSHED AT THE GERMAN.

YOU
SCURVY RAT. I'LL
FLATTEN YOU!

DON'T, IRON-
FIST! THEY'LL
SHOOT YOU!

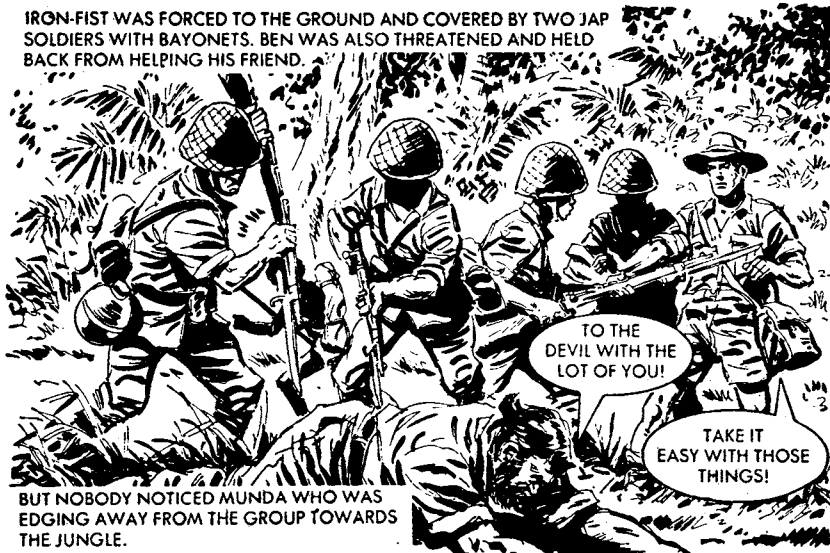


THE SAILOR'S VENGEANCE WAS SHORT-LIVED, BUT HE HAD TIME TO SEND SCHULTZ CRASHING TO THE GROUND, BEFORE HE HIMSELF WAS SET UPON BY THE JAPS.

BEAT HIM DOWN!



IRON-FIST WAS FORCED TO THE GROUND AND COVERED BY TWO JAP SOLDIERS WITH BAYONETS. BEN WAS ALSO THREATENED AND HELD BACK FROM HELPING HIS FRIEND.



BUT NOBODY NOTICED MUNDA WHO WAS EDGING AWAY FROM THE GROUP TOWARDS THE JUNGLE.

ONE JAP SOLDIER TURNED ROUND AND SPOTTED MUNDA RUNNING TOWARDS THE JUNGLE, AND HE FIRED AT THE FLEEING NATIVE. FORTUNATELY THE JAP WAS A POOR SHOT AND MUNDA WAS ABLE TO REACH THE SANCTUARY OF THE TREES UNHURT!!



AFTER INSPECTING THE GOLD, THE JAPS FORCED BEN AND IRON-FIST TO CARRY IT FOR THEM AS THEY STARTED THE LONG TREK BACK TO THEIR BASE.

YOU WILL PAY FOR THAT BLOW, HACKER. I WILL HAVE YOU KILLED!

SHUT UP, SCHULTZ! BEFORE I RAM THE GOLD DOWN YOUR THROAT.

MUNDA HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN FOR THE MOMENT, BUT THE NATIVE INTENDED TO FOLLOW HIS FRIENDS TO THEIR DESTINATION AND HE WATCHED SILENTLY AS THEY WERE FORCED THROUGH THE JUNGLE.

DO NOT WORRY, BEN. MUNDA HAS NOT FORGOTTEN YOU.

EVENTUALLY THE JAPS AND THEIR TWO PRISONERS REACHED A SMALL TOWN ON THE COAST THAT SERVED AS THE JAPANESE H.Q. FOR THE AREA.

YOU KNOW THIS PLACE, IRON-FIST?

SURE, IT'S A STINKING LITTLE PLACE. I USED TO ANCHOR HERE FOR SUPPLIES WHEN I WAS TRADING IN THE SOLOMONS.

THE JAP BASE WAS DIRTY AND CONSISTED OF SEVERAL HUTS, AND A FEW WAREHOUSES. IT WAS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT THE JAPS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH BEN OR IRONFIST FOR THEY LEFT THEM SITTING OUTSIDE A WAREHOUSE GUARDED BY TWO MEN.



A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE TWO PRISONERS WERE ESCORTED TO A NEARBY WAREHOUSE WHICH HAD BARS ACROSS THE WINDOWS, AND WHICH BEN RIGHTLY SUSPECTED THE JAPS USED AS A TEMPORARY PRISON.



AFTER THE DOOR HAD BEEN LOCKED AND BOLTED, BEN AND IRON-FIST EXAMINED THEIR SURROUNDINGS, AND WERE SURPRISED TO SEE THAT THE WAREHOUSE HAD ANOTHER OCCUPANT, WHO WAS SITTING IN THE CORNER WATCHING THEM.



WELCOME TO THE HOTEL, GUYS. SORRY IT ISN'T MORE COMFORTABLE.

JUST WHO MIGHT YOU BE, MATE?

THE PRISONER INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS LIEUTENANT BRAD RAYNER OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY, AND HE EXPLAINED WHAT HE HAD BEEN DOING BEFORE HE WAS CAPTURED BY THE JAPS.



I WAS EXECUTIVE OFFICER ABOARD A PATROL TORPEDO BOAT OPERATING ALONG THE WEST COAST OF NEW GUINEA.

WE COULD USE YOUR P.T. BOAT RIGHT NOW, LIEUTENANT.

RAYNER EXPLAINED THAT HIS FLOTILLA HAD A HIDE-OUT FURTHER UP THE COAST WHERE IT WAS SUPPLIED AND REFUELLED AT REGULAR INTERVALS BY A SUPPLY SHIP FROM AUSTRALIA.

AND HOW DID YOU END UP IN THIS RAT-HOLE?

MY BOAT WAS SUNK BY A JAP DESTROYER OFF THE COAST. I WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR.

THE LIEUTENANT HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE WAREHOUSE WHERE THE JAPS HAD BEEN TRYING, WITHOUT SUCCESS, TO MAKE HIM REVEAL THE LOCATION OF HIS BASE.

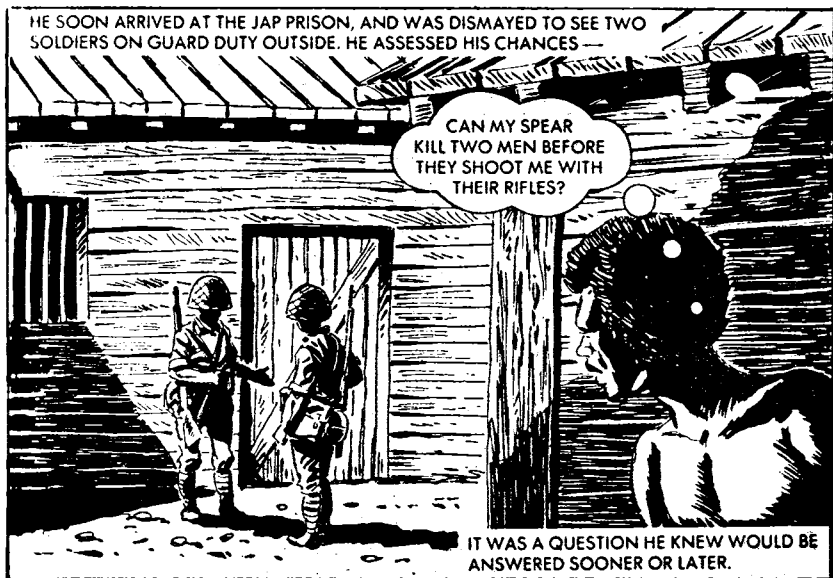
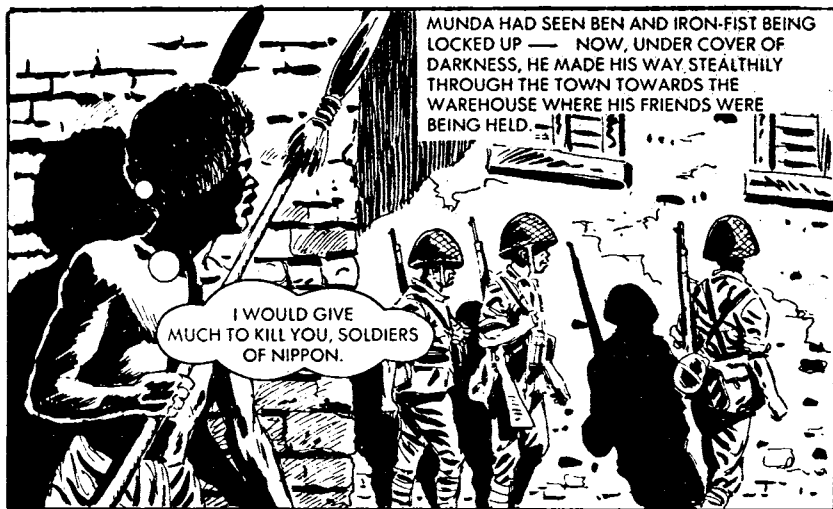
KNOWING THAT THE JAPS MEANT TO MOVE THE GOLD BY SEA TO THE EAST INDIES, BEN TOLD RAYNER ABOUT THEIR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY, AND ABOUT THE GOLD.

YOUR P.T. BOATS WOULD BE IDEAL FOR AMBUSHING THE JAP FREIGHTER WHEN SHE SAILS.

IT'S THE KIND OF JOB OUR COMMANDER WOULD JUMP AT.

BUT AS THE THREE PRISONERS TALKED INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE, A SHADOWY FIGURE WAS LOOKING DOWN ON THE SMALL PORT — IT WAS MUNDA, WHOM EVERYBODY SEEMED TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT.

IT IS DARK. NOW I CAN HELP FREE MY FRIENDS!



BUT MUNDA WAS TO HAVE AN ALLY, IN THE SHAPE OF A STRAY DOG WHICH HAD BEEN PROWLING AROUND THE BASE LOOKING FOR SCRAPS. THE DOG WAS IN A MEAN MOOD AND WHEN THE JAPS STARTED THROWING STONES AT THE ANIMAL, IT TURNED AND STARTED BARKING AT THE TWO GUARDS.



HE SUDDENLY SPRANG OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND PLUNGED HIS SPEAR INTO THE NEAREST GUARD.



THE OTHER GUARD WAS ABOUT TO FIRE HIS RIFLE AT MUNDA, WHEN THE DOG DASHED IN AND SNATCHED AT THE SLING. THIS GAVE MUNDA THE CHANCE HE WAS WAITING FOR—



THE SECOND GUARD FELL TO THE GROUND, AND MUNDA WATCHED AS HIS STRANGE ALLY RAN OFF INTO THE DARKNESS.



MUNDA THEN PUT HIS SPEAR TO ANOTHER USE — OPENING THE WAREHOUSE DOOR.

CAN YOU
HEAR ME? IT IS
MUNDA. I HAVE COME
TO SET YOU FREE!



IN LESS THAN A MINUTE THE THREE
PRISONERS WERE BURSTING OUT OF THE
WAREHOUSE.

GOOD ON YOU,
MUNDA. I SHOULD HAVE
KNOWN YOU WOULDN'T
JUST RUN AWAY!

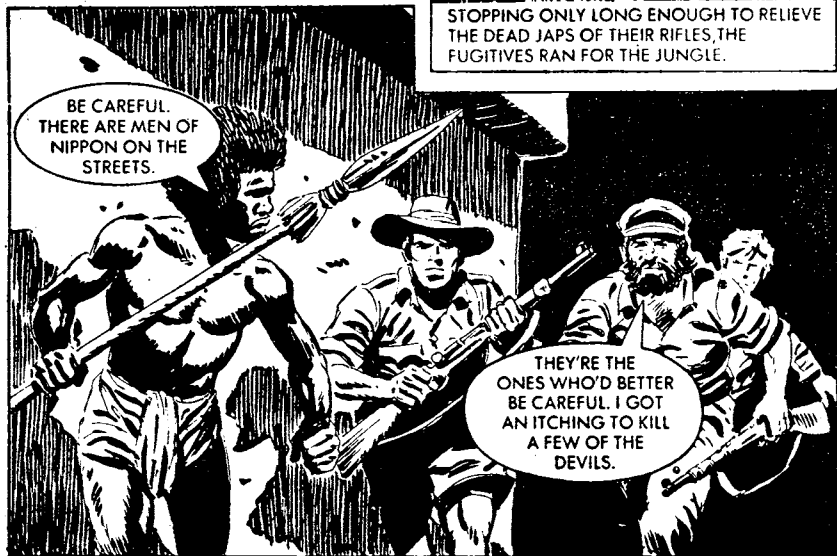
THE SPIRITS
HELPED ME. ONE CAME
AS A DOG!



STOPPING ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO RELIEVE
THE DEAD JAPS OF THEIR RIFLES, THE
FUGITIVES RAN FOR THE JUNGLE.

BE CAREFUL.
THERE ARE MEN OF
NIPPON ON THE
STREETS.

THEY'RE THE
ONES WHO'D BETTER
BE CAREFUL. I GOT
AN ITCHING TO KILL
A FEW OF THE
DEVILS.



THEY MOVED LIKE SHADOWS, BUT BEFORE BEN AND HIS COMPANIONS CLEARED THE PORT, THEY RAN STRAIGHT INTO A JAPANESE PATROL.

WHITE MEN.
OPEN FIRE!

BLAST
THEIR YELLOW
SKINS...

THE FUGITIVES HAD THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE ON THEIR SIDE, AND THEY USED IT TO FULL ADVANTAGE.

EMPTY YOUR
MAGAZINE AND THEN
INTO THE ALLEY, IRON-
FIST. WE CAN'T AFFORD
TO HANG ABOUT
HERE!

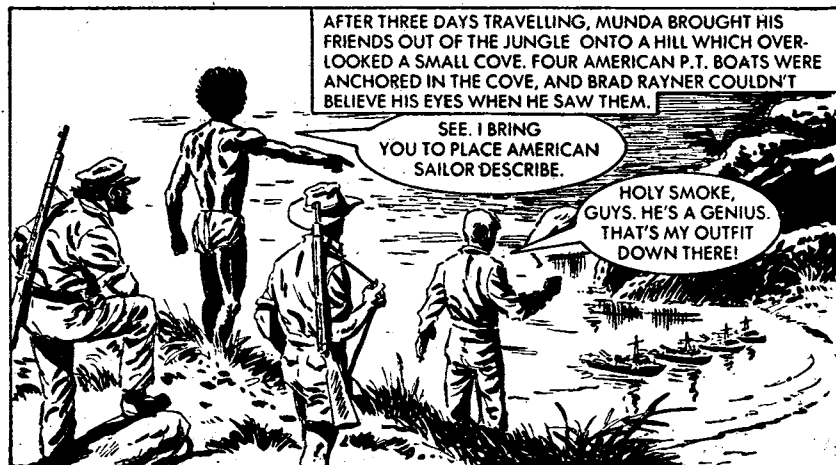
THIS RACKET
WILL BRING EVERY
JAP IN NEW GUINEA
ON TOP OF US!

BEN HEARD THE NOISE OF MORE JAPS COMING DOWN THE STREET, AND HE ORDERED HIS FRIENDS TO MOVE OUT. THEY ALL KNEW THAT TO RUN FOR THE JUNGLE WAS NOW THEIR ONLY CHANCE.



SOON THE FUGITIVES WERE CLEAR OF THE TOWN, AND ENTERING THE DARK JUNGLE. BUT THE SOUNDS OF THE JAPANESE PURSUIT COULD STILL BE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.





TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS WHO WERE ABOARD ONE OF THE P.T. BOATS WERE SUDDENLY SHOCKED TO SEE FOUR FIGURES SPLASHING THROUGH THE WATER TOWARDS THEM. ONE OF THE OFFICERS SHOUTED A WARNING.

MAKE A
FRIENDLY NOISE OR YOU'RE
ALL DEAD DUCKS!

DON'T SHOOT,
COMMANDER. IT'S ME,
BRAD RAYNER!

THE AMERICAN COMMANDER, HANK CROSBY, WAS OVERJOYED TO SEE BRAD, AND HE WAS EAGER TO FIND OUT WHAT HAD BEEN HAPPENING TO THE LIEUTENANT.

WHERE THE
DEVIL YOU BEEN,
BRAD? YOUR BOAT WAS
SUNK BY A NIP
DESTROYER!

IT'S A LONG
STORY, COMMANDER.
I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT
IT IN THE WARD-
ROOM!

CROSBY WAS TOLD ALL ABOUT RAYNER'S CAPTURE AND ESCAPE, AND OF BEN AND IRON-FIST'S QUEST TO RETRIEVE THE GOLD FROM THE JAPS. HE WAS NOT, HOWEVER, IMPRESSED WITH THE AMOUNT OF GOLD INVOLVED.

SO IT'S ONLY
WORTH SEVERAL THOUSAND
POUNDS, STERLING. GEE,
THAT AIN'T MUCH
GOLD.

ENOUGH
TO EQUIP OUR
VOLUNTEERS, AND TO
TURN US INTO A FIRST
CLASS FIGHTING
UNIT!

THE COMMANDER DECIDED TO HELP BEN AND IRON-FIST
BY ATTACKING THE JAPANESE FREIGHTER WHICH WOULD
BE CARRYING THE GOLD WHEN SHE SAILED.

MUNDA WAS THEN GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS. IT WOULD BE VITAL
TO KNOW EXACTLY WHEN THE JAP FREIGHTER SAILED, AND HE
WAS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE TO RETURN TO THE TOWN AND FIND
OUT.

YOU WATCH
THE PORT. WHEN
THE JAP SHIP SAILS
YOU COME BACK
HERE TO TELL
US.

OK. I
GO NOW.



THE NATIVE WATCHED THE PORT CONSTANTLY, AND ON THE SECOND DAY WAS REWARDED WITH THE SIGHT OF THE JAP FREIGHTER MOVING SLOWLY AWAY FROM THE QUAY, HER DESTROYER ESCORT WAITING IN THE DISTANCE.

NIPPON SHIP SAIL AWAY.
NOW TO GO BACK
AND TELL BEN!

HE HURRIED OFF, HIS ONLY ARMAMENT THE NEW
SPEAR HE HAD FASHIONED FOR HIMSELF WHILE
HE WAITED.

MOVING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE JUNGLE, MUNDA REACHED THE COVE IN LESS THAN TWO DAYS. THERE HE PASSED ON HIS INFORMATION.

SHIP WITH
GOLD LEAVE TWO
DAYS AGO!

IMMEDIATELY HANK CROSBY GAVE THE ORDER
FOR HIS CREWS TO PREPARE FOR SEA.

AS SOON AS IT WAS DARK THE FOUR P.T. BOATS SAILED ON A COURSE TO INTERCEPT THE JAP FREIGHTER AND HER DESTROYER ESCORT.

HOW SOON BEFORE WE SIGHT 'EM, COMMANDER?

ROUND ABOUT DAWN, BEN. SAY, THIS SURE IS GOING TO BE ONE FUN TRIP, EH?

BEN WAS NOT TOO SURE, FOR HE KNEW THE JAPS WOULD NOT GO DOWN WITHOUT A STRUGGLE.

DAWN FOUND THE AMERICAN VESSELS IN SIGHT OF THEIR PREY, AND HANK CROSBY EXCITEDLY ORDERED THE ATTACK.

DO YOU SEE ANYTHING, COMMANDER?

YUH BET I DO, BOY. ONE DESTROYER, AND ONE STINKING NIP FREIGHTER HEADING NORTH. THIS IS IT — CHARGE!

THE P.T. BOATS SPED TOWARDS THE FREIGHTER AND ITS ESCORT. BUT THE JAP DESTROYER OPENED FIRE, HITTING ONE OF THE AMERICAN VESSELS.

THOSE OPENING SHOTS ARE PRETTY CLOSE, AND THEY'VE GOT WALLY.

IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE JAPS WERE CONFIDENT OF BEATING OFF THE ATTACK.

HANK CROSBY YELLED A COMMAND, AND SEVERAL TORPEDOES WENT SPEEDING TOWARDS THE DESTROYER.

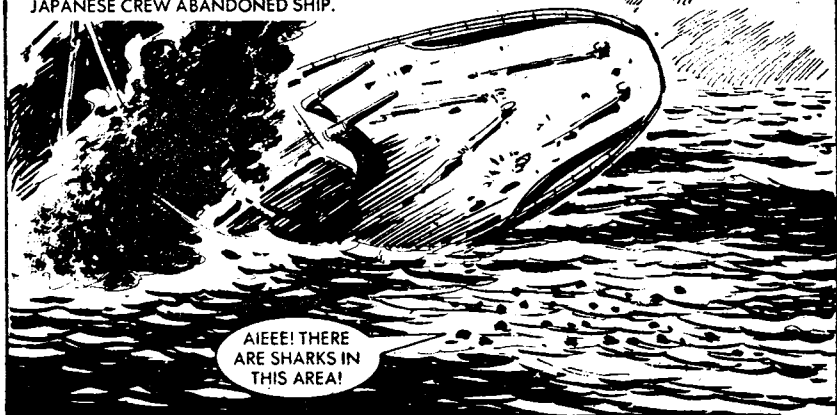
COME ON YOU BABIES. GIVE US THAT NIP TIN-CAN!

THREE OF THE AMERICAN TORPEDOES WERE BANG ON TARGET, AND WERE ENOUGH TO SPELL THE END FOR THE JAP DESTROYER.

WOW, SEE THAT NIP BOAT JUMP!

IT'S THE LAST TIME SHE EVER WILL, BOY!

THE DESTROYER SLOWLY KEELED OVER, AND THE AMERICANS WATCHED IN SATISFACTION AS THE JAPANESE CREW ABANDONED SHIP.



WITH THE DESTROYER OUT OF THE WAY, THE AMERICAN TORPEDO BOATS TURNED THEIR ATTENTION TO THE DEFENCELESS FREIGHTER.



IT WAS PLAIN TO SEE THAT SOME OF THE JAPANESE CREW HAD ALREADY ABANDONED THE FREIGHTER TO ITS FATE.

OUT OF CONTROL, THE CRIPPLED FREIGHTER SWUNG SLOWLY ROUND TO FACE THE AMERICAN BOATS.

SHE'S
HEADING
OUR WAY.

FEEL LIKE
BOARDING HER,
BEN?

THE COMMANDER WAS ENJOYING
HIMSELF IMMENSELY.

AS THE P.T. BOAT DREW ALONGSIDE THE FREIGHTER, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT ONE OR TWO OF THE AMERICAN TORPEDOES HAD DONE THEIR JOB, FOR SEVERAL FIRES WERE RAGING UNCONTROLLABLY ON THE JAP VESSEL'S DECK.

SHE'S
ALL OURS,
FELLAS!

I JUST HOPE
WE CAN GET HOLD
OF THE GOLD,
MATE!

IRON-FIST'S GREED WAS SHOWING THROUGH
YET AGAIN.

BEN AND HIS COMPANIONS CLIMBED OVER THE DECK-RAIL, AND WERE MET BY A FUSILLADE OF SHOTS FIRED BY THE FREIGHTER'S REMAINING CREW MEMBERS.

WATCH OUT
FOR THEM SAMURAI
SWORDS, BUSTER!

EVER SEEN A
SAMURAI WITH HIS
SWORD WRAPPED ROUND
HIS NECK?

THE JAPS MANAGED TO SCORE A FEW HITS
BEFORE BEN, MUNDA, IRON-FIST AND THE
AMERICANS CHARGED INTO THEM.

IF THEY
WANT TO SURRENDER,
LET 'EM!

JAPS DON'T
SURRENDER. YOU HAVE TO
KILL THEM, FARRADAY!

THE JAPANESE SAILORS FOUGHT
DESPERATELY TO KEEP CONTROL OF
THEIR SHIP.

THE JAPS ON THE DECK OF THE FREIGHTER WERE SOON DEALT WITH, BUT FROM THE ENGINE-ROOM CAME A LAST DITCH CHARGE, LED BY NONE OTHER THAN KARL SCHULTZ, SENT ALONG TO SAFEGUARD THE GOLD.



AS SOON AS IRON-FIST SAW SCHULTZ, HIS EYES GLINTED ANGRILY, AND HE DARTED TOWARDS THE GERMAN.



SCHULTZ HAD TIME TO FIRE HIS LUGER ONCE, GRAZING IRON-FIST'S SHOULDER. BUT NOTHING COULD STOP THE SAILOR NOW.



SOON THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE JAP SHIP WAS OVER, AND THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE CREW WERE LOADED INTO THE LIFEBOATS. HANK CROSBY, HOWEVER, HAD SOME GOOD NEWS FOR BEN.



THE JAP SKIPPER WAS EAGER TO GET OFF HIS SHIP BEFORE IT SANK, AND HE WILLINGLY TOOK BEN TO HIS CABIN AND SHOWED HIM WHERE THE GOLD WAS STORED.



ALL THAT REMAINED TO DO NOW WAS SPLIT THE GOLD, AND THEN RETURN TO THE WAITING P.T. BOATS. BUT BEN HADN'T COUNTED ON IRON-FIST'S GREED.

I LOST
MY SHIP ON THIS
VENTURE, FARRADAY.
MY SHARE OF THIS IS
THREE-QUARTERS!

THE DEAL
WAS FIFTY-FIFTY,
IRON-FIST.

BUT IRON-FIST WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE HIS OWN WAY — USING
FORCE IF NECESSARY.

CURSE YE,
FARRADAY. I'LL HAVE
IT ALL NOW!

NO,
IRON-FIST!

MUNDA LOOKED ON ANXIOUSLY AS THE TWO
MEN GRAPPLED.

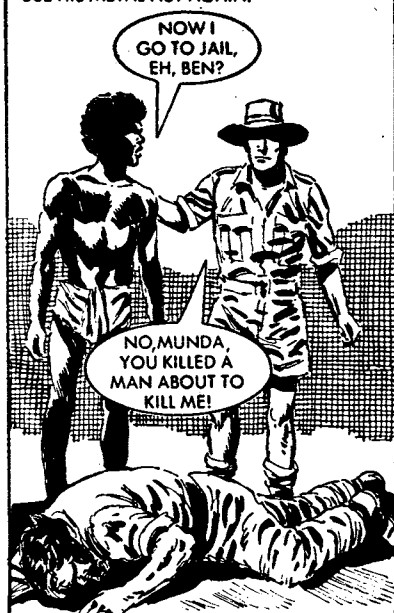
THE NATIVE KNEW THAT IRON-FIST WOULD PROBABLY KILL HIS FRIEND, AND HE INSTINCTIVELY THREW HIS SPEAR AT THE SAILOR.



NO,
ARGHHHHH!

BEST YOU
DIE, IRON-FIST!

IRON-FIST HACKER WOULD NEVER USE HIS METAL FIST AGAIN.



NOW I
GO TO JAIL,
EH, BEN?

NO, MUNDA,
YOU KILLED A
MAN ABOUT TO
KILL ME!



BEN TOLD HANK CROSBY WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND THE AMERICAN DECIDED THAT THE INCIDENT WOULD BE BEST FORGOTTEN.



NONE OF
MY BUSINESS,
BUD. I'M HAPPY THAT
WE WON A VICTORY
OVER THE JAPS.

THE GOLD
WILL BE PUT TO
GOOD USE.

IT WAS AGREED THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD SLIP BACK TO THEIR SECRET ANCHORAGE, BUT FIRST BEN AND MUNDA WERE PUT ASHORE AT A FRIENDLY VILLAGE UP THE COAST.



AT THE VILLAGE, BEN HIRED CARRIERS FOR THE GOLD, TO TAKE IT BACK TO THE BRITISH-HELD PART OF THE ISLAND.



AND WITH THE GOLD, BEN AND HIS UNIT WERE ABLE TO EQUIP THEMSELVES PROPERLY AND TO PLAY THEIR PART IN THE FUTURE CAMPAIGNS TO PUSH THE JAPS OFF THE ISLAND . . . WITH THE FURTHER HELP OF MUNDA, NOW A VERY PROUD CORPORAL!



The next four all-action Commando books are out in two weeks!
Look out for:—

" WITCH-DOCTOR "
" FIRE IN THE FOREST "

" THE FORTUNES OF WAR "
" INTO THE JUNGLE "

COMMANDO SPELLS ACTION!

And These Four Latest
Exciting Books Are
No Exception.

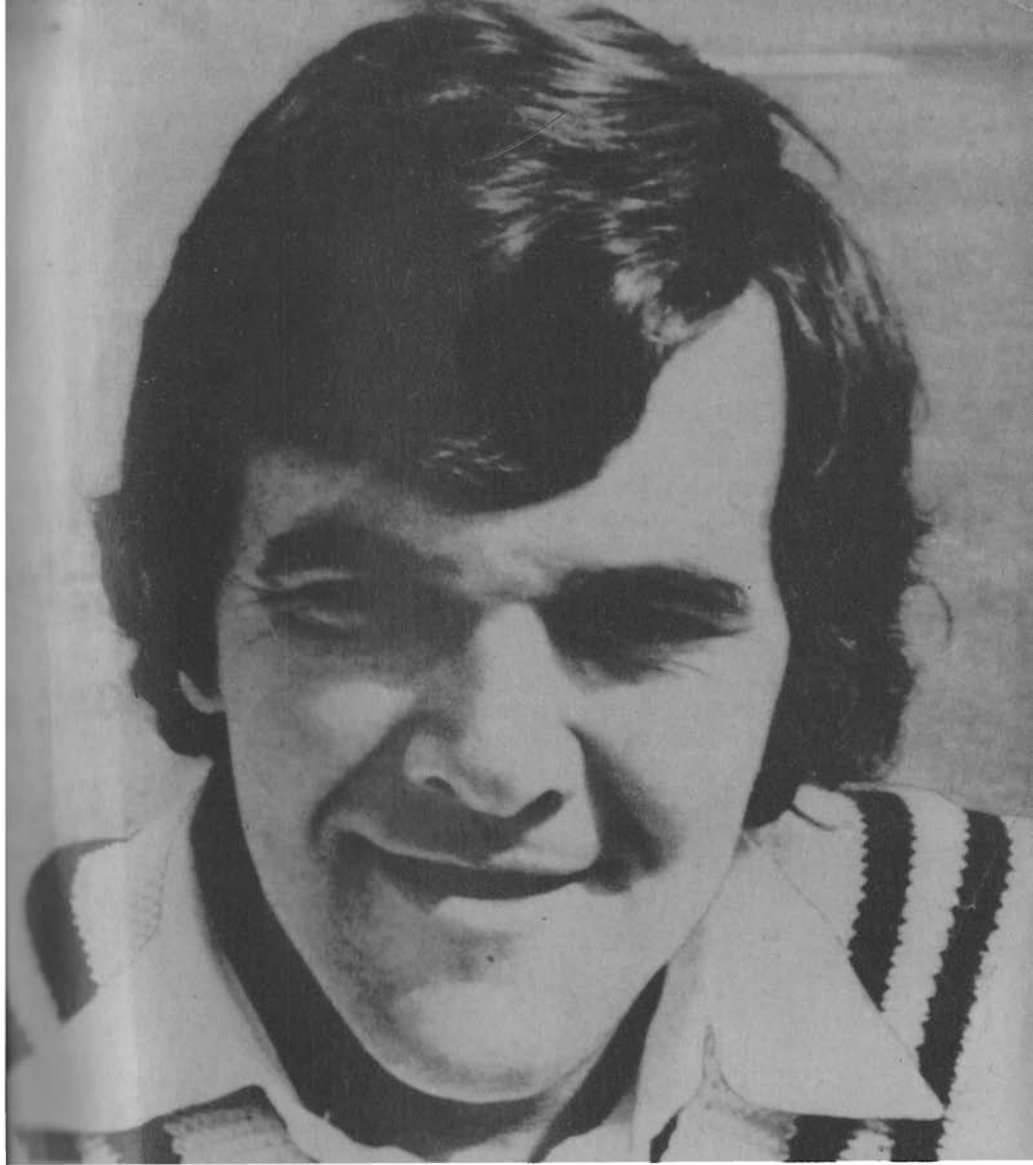


***YOU'VE GOT
ONE-***



***-GO GET
THE OTHER
THREE!***

Printed and Published in Great Britain by D. C. THOMSON & Co., Ltd.,
185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS. © D. C. Thomson & Co., Ltd., 1980.



Stars of Cricket — Stephen Rouse

NEW GUINEA GOLD

THE American P.T. boats warily circled the Japanese destroyer. One hit from its guns would spell instant death for the small vessels, but they knew they must sink it for it was guarding a merchant ship that was carrying a fortune in gold.

There were men on those boats who had trekked for weeks through jungles and over mountains to get that gold, and they weren't going to give up now.

 **Commando**

